

# Connecticut Nonprofit Human Services Cabinet

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Testimony to the Public Health Committee  
January 31, 2007

## SUPPORT FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH CARE

By Nora Duncan, Project Director

### RE: Senate Bill 1: An Act Increasing Access to Affordable, Quality Healthcare

Honored Members of the Public Health Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding Senate Bill 1, An Act Increasing Access to Affordable, Quality Healthcare. The Connecticut Nonprofit Human Services Cabinet is a statewide coalition representing approximately 1,000 nonprofit human service providers. Its mission is to advance a strong and unified nonprofit human services system to most effectively meet community needs. One of the most important unmet community needs is health care for every resident of our state. Right now, nearly 400,000 Connecticut residents, the majority of whom are working families, have no health insurance and many more are under-insured or one paycheck away from becoming uninsured.

The Nonprofit Cabinet supports Universal Health Care and the five specific principals endorsed by the Institute of Medicine:

1. Health care coverage should be universal, meaning it covers everyone.
2. Health care coverage should be continuous, portable from job to job, and cover the periods between employment.
3. Health care coverage should be affordable, especially to low-income individuals and families.
4. The health insurance strategy should be affordable and sustainable for society.
5. Health insurance should enhance health and well-being by promoting access to high-quality care that is effective, efficient, safe, timely, patient-centered and equitable.

Alarming increases in health care costs and increasing rolls of uninsured residents have made health care a top priority for the Legislative Branch and the Executive Branch, Republicans and Democrats, the business community, the faith based community, advocates, educators, insurers and providers. Getting to a point where everyone can agree will be difficult, but it is possible, affordable and the right thing to do for our state.

I am representing nonprofit human service providers, consumers, employees and employers with my testimony today. I urge the Committee to move forward with a bill that includes the five principals I mentioned and adequately addresses three other key issues:

1. **RATES:** without adequate rates there will be significant challenges to accessing care. This state has huge rate problems in primary health care, behavioral health care and prevention that must be addressed once and for all.
2. **MANDATES:** Important insurance mandates, such as those in mental health and addiction treatment, must be preserved. Failing to do so flies in the face of progress.
3. **PREVENTION:** Preventative medicine and health education are key to avoiding higher costs in the long run. Part of today's health care crisis is a direct result of our failure to address matters early.

Your efforts on this challenging issue are appreciated. Please feel free to call on the members of the Nonprofit Cabinet for help as appropriate. Thank you.

Connecticut AIDS Resource Coalition

Connecticut Association for Community Action

Connecticut Association of Area Agencies on Aging

Connecticut Association of Nonprofits

Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Connecticut Community Providers Association

Connecticut Consortium of Legal Services

Connecticut Council of Family Services Agencies

Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services

Connecticut Women's Consortium

Easter Seals Connecticut

End Hunger Connecticut!

Human Services Council

Oak Hill

Planned Parenthood of Connecticut

The Connection, Inc.

The Arc of Connecticut

Wheeler Clinic